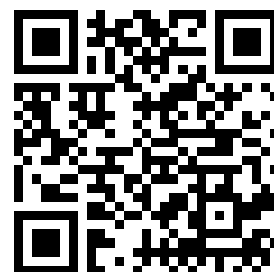

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Promise of the Land



Promise of the Land



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Foreword

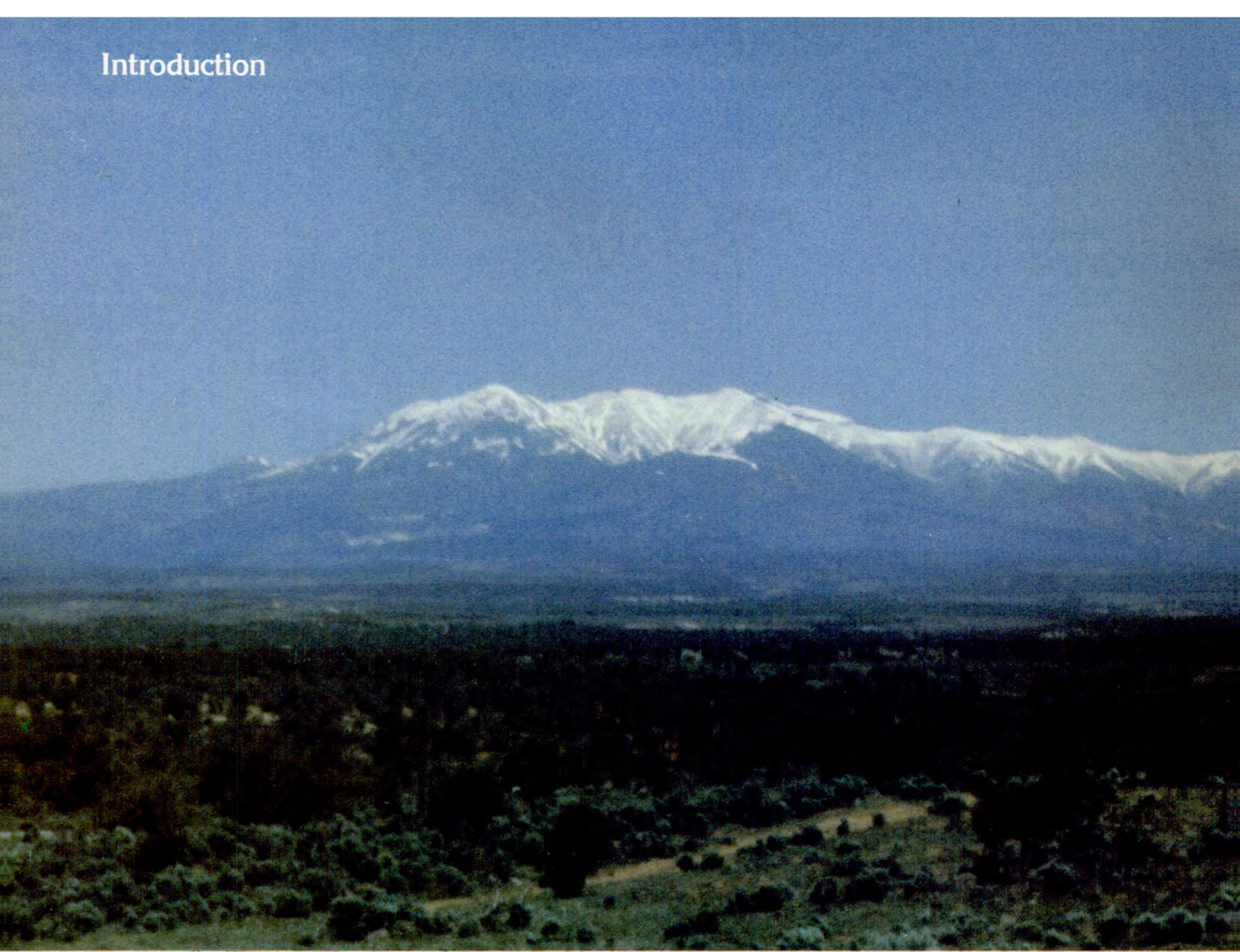
As a Nation, Americans once owned nearly two billion acres of public lands. In the course of our national expansion and development, public lands were sold or deeded by the Federal Government to the States and their counties and municipalities, to educational institutions, and to private citizens and industries. Other lands were set aside as national parks, forests, monuments, wildlife refuges, wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers and for military installations.

The remaining public lands comprise about one-fifth of our Nation's land area. Under the landmark Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, these lands are to be managed

under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield for the benefit of all Americans. The agency charged with this responsibility is the Bureau of Land Management of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Few people outside the West are knowledgeable about the public lands. The purpose of this publication is to acquaint the general public with the bountiful assets of these lands and the promise they hold for Americans today and in the future.

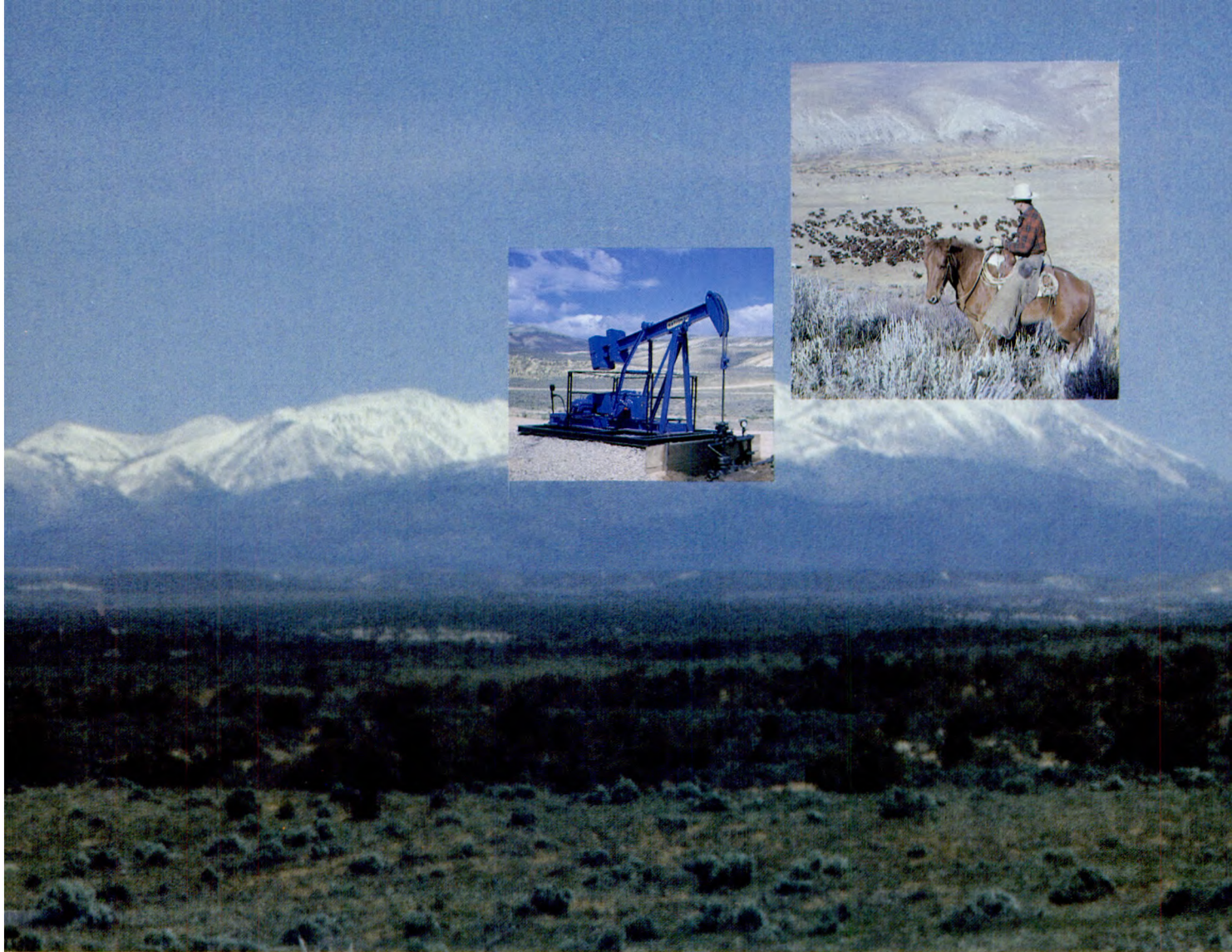
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management



Long before the American Revolution was over, settlers penetrated the mountain passes to claim land in that vast continental expanse waiting beyond the Appalachian Mountains. Then as the young Nation continued to expand, descendants of these first settlers followed the frontier to the Pacific Ocean. In this, the greatest human migration the modern world has known, the pioneers faced daily hardships and frequent dangers to realize a dream the Old World had denied them—the promise of land.

It has been more than a hundred years since we reached the western sea. In the meantime, the waves of westerly migration have washed into the farthest mountain valley and traced the course of every river. The land is now one great Nation, and the promise of the land still remains.

Today's challenge, however, is no longer to conquer the land in western America, but rather to share equitably the resources of these lands that went unclaimed during the land rush days of the



late 19th century. These "lands that nobody wanted" possess resources of enormous value to both the residents of the region and to the Nation as a whole.

These public lands are rich in energy resources and other valuable commodities. The lands contain 40 percent of the Nation's coal reserves; 80 percent of its oil shale; and large deposits of oil, natural gas, uranium ore, tar sands, and geothermal heat. They also provide wood products, minerals and construction materials,

and grazing for livestock. Their watersheds are indispensable to the production of electrical energy for homes and industries.

The stunning natural beauty of these public lands in some areas rivals that of our most famous national parks, wilderness areas, and other Federal preserves, while other areas contain extraordinary scientific, historical, and cultural values. The lands also provide habitat for a wide variety of wildlife and for wild horses and burros. Further, the public lands offer un-

surpassed outdoor recreational opportunities, including hunting, fishing, camping and, for some, merely solitude.

Except for a few scattered islands and tracts outside the West, the public lands in the lower 48 States are in the 11 western-most States. Large areas of public lands are in the Mountain States of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Nevada. Farther west in the Pacific States, large acreage of public lands is in California,



Washington and Oregon.

These States with large public landholdings comprise the fastest growing region in the country. In an extraordinarily short period, in historic terms, the States have grown and matured. Over the past several years, while the population of all other States rose an average 5 percent, these Western States averaged an 11 percent increase in population.

The region also has urbanized to an astonishing degree. As of 1970, half of the States were listed among the Nation's 20 most urbanized States. In California, our most populous State, 90.9 percent

of the population now lives in urban areas. In Nevada, 80.9 percent lives in urban areas; in Utah, 80.4 percent; in Arizona, 79.6 percent; in Colorado, 78.5 percent; and in Washington, 72.6 percent. Well over one-half of the residents of the remaining States are clustered in metropolitan areas.

The West's burgeoning growth is placing new and stronger demands on the public lands and their resources. Cities are now rivals of the traditional users of the public land resources—the ranchers and miners. The cities, for example, need land for expansion. They compete with farmers and

ranchers for water that flows from the public lands. To sustain their economies, the cities seek development of the vast energy resources present on the public lands. At the same time, for their own recreational and aesthetic pleasure, residents of the urbanized West demand access to the public lands, the last of the "wide open spaces."

Superimposed on this local competition for the public land resources are the needs of the Nation. The public lands are being called upon today to play a central role in the life of the Nation. As the country looks for ways to meet its



growing energy, food and fiber, timber, water, recreational and other demands, national attention has turned to the resources of the public lands owned by all Americans. Controversy and conflict over the use of these resources have followed.

The Bureau of Land Management seeks to resolve the conflicting interests in the public lands within the multiple use and sustained yield principles of the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). These management principles have since been reinforced by additional legislation. Both the Federal Coal

Leasing Amendments Act of 1976 and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 stress careful planning, balanced multiple use, and broad public participation. This includes public hearings, public meetings, and the submission of written comments and suggestions.

What follows is the story of our public lands—where they are; what their valuable resources are; how they are managed; their past contributions to the development of our Nation; and the great promise they hold for the future.



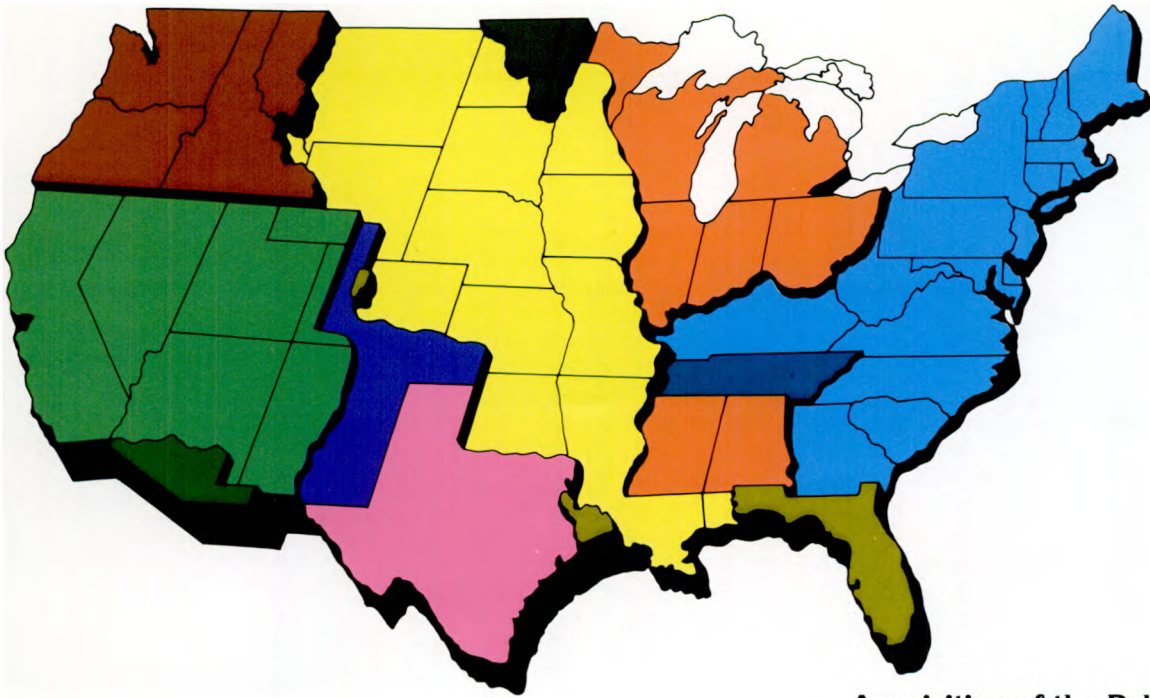
I. Foundations of the Promise

Before the American Revolution, lands outside colonial charters were traditionally crown lands, not only those of the British crown, but France and Spain as well. From across the Atlantic, monarchs granted vast domain land rights to individuals. The American Congress radically reversed this practice. Congress approved legislation to administer "public domain" lands for the people, for public purposes, and for the public good.

The public domain was created when our original 13 States ceded most of their unsettled lands—237 million acres—to our new central Government. The Government needed to sell some of these public lands to cover Revolutionary War debts and to finance our young Nation's future. We had already offered land grants to men enlisting in the Continental Army.

With the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the country began an enormous land acquisition program that doubled the Nation's land area. In the next fifty years, our country expanded westward as the Federal Government acquired more land through treaties and purchases. Finally, with the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867, some 1.8 billion acres constituted our public domain. This covered three-fourths of the continental United States and all of Alaska.

As new land was acquired, public policies turned more and more toward settlement and development of the added territories. The Federal Government offered generous land grants to new States and to agricultural colleges and other educational institutions to foster growth. Land subsidies were given to build roads, canals, and



Acquisition of the Public Domain

Territory of the Original Thirteen States

- State cessions to the United States
- North Carolina cession to the United States 1790
- United States cession to Tennessee, 1806 and 1846
- The Original Thirteen States (present area) plus the District of Columbia

Territory of the Republic of Texas (Annexation of Texas, 1845)

- United States purchase from Texas 1850
- State of Texas (present area)

Other Acquisitions by the United States

- Louisiana purchase from France 1803
- Agreement with Great Britain 1818
- Treaty with Spain (cession of Florida and adjustment of claims) 1819
- Oregon Compromise with Great Britain 1846
- Cession from Mexico 1848
- Gadsden Purchase from Mexico 1853

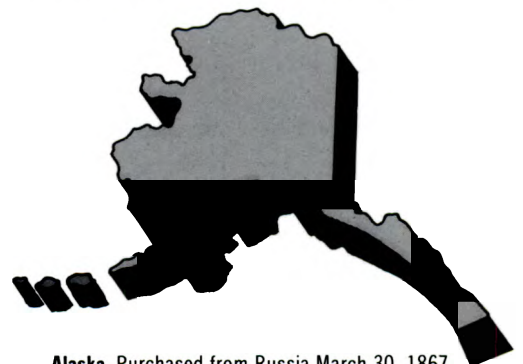
railroads. Then, there was the famous Homestead Act of 1862 that granted 160 acres to those who would farm and live on them for five years.

By the middle of the 20th century, Congress and the American people had transferred one billion acres of land from the public domain to private or local government ownership.

More than 350 million acres of the public domain are left. The major portion of these lands are in Alaska—182 million acres—with the remaining 174 million located in the lower 48 States. These lands in the lower 48 are those that no one wanted; they were bypassed in favor of more promising areas during the course of settlement. The lands are the mountaintops, the steep canyons, vacant valleys, and sandy deserts. They have been described as "long on desert and

short on water"; they have also been called "stretches of picturesque poverty."

Despite their shortcomings, the remnants of the public domain have many economic and aesthetic values. As noted by the President in his 1979 Environmental Message to Congress, few natural resource issues facing the Nation are more important than the management, protection and use of the public lands owned by all Americans.



Alaska Purchased from Russia March 30, 1867

II. Evolution of a Land Management Agency

Prior to 1812, administration of the public domain was a major responsibility of the Secretary of the Treasury. But as the Nation drifted toward its second war with Great Britain, Congress sought to relieve the Secretary of these duties by establishing a General Land Office (GLO) as the first Departmental subagency.

Under the supervision of its first Commissioner, Edward Tiffin, an Ohio statesman and former surveyor, the new General Land Office initiated the first organized system of public land management. The system included all aspects of control, administration, recording and transfer of public lands—by grant, sale, or other means—and was supported by district land offices located appropriately throughout the Nation. At their peak, there were 123 of these land offices, and it was from their frenetic disposal of the public domain that the phrase, “doing a land office business,” came into use.

In 1849, the GLO was transferred to the newly created Department of the Interior. Organized according to functions, the GLO had nine main divisions: public lands, surveys, private land claims, military bounty lands, land sales, preemption claims, recording of patents, distribution of lands, and fiscal matters. Land disposals continued at such a fast pace that by 1855 the GLO was four years behind in its work due to the lack of qualified clerical personnel to handle the paperwork. The agency had yet to feel the impact of the now defunct Homestead Act of 1862, with its offer of 160 acres of free land, and the still active Mining Act of 1872, which provides for passage of land title to a miner who shows his mining claim is valid and whose survey plat is approved.

At the close of the 19th century,

the Federal Government was exercising little control over the distribution of the public domain and its resources. The GLO was issuing land patents to farmers who claimed the best farmlands; to mining companies that claimed the richest mineral deposits; to lumbermen who sought the best timberlands; and to cattlemen and sheepmen who soon learned they could control vast areas of public lands by claiming the land around streams and waterholes. From their strategic footholds near these sources of water, the cattlemen and sheepmen grazed their livestock freely and in great numbers on the public domain.

During the first third of this century, sheep and cattle ranchers continued to increase the numbers of livestock they were running on the public rangelands of the West. This use reached the point of intense competition for the forage with attendant human conflict and severe overgrazing. These abuses led the Congress, in 1934, to pass one of the most sweeping land management laws known. This was the Taylor Grazing Act that provided for the orderly use, improvement, and development of the forage on the public rangelands. This much needed legislation also established the U.S. Grazing Service to carry out its provisions. (In similar fashion, Congress was led in 1976 to deal with public land conflicts of a different order of magnitude. The result was the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.)

Selected to head the Grazing Service was Farrington R. Carpenter, a man of unusual background and persuasive ability. Carpenter, a Harvard-trained country lawyer, had been a student of government under Woodrow Wilson at Princeton. He was well-educated in the Western mores and the historical and economic significance of the frontier. Above all, he was a homesteader and livestock operator from Hayden, Colorado.

From 1934 to 1946, the Grazing Service and the General Land Office shared responsibilities for the administration of the public domain. Then in 1946, Congress combined the functions of both the agencies into a single agency—the present Bureau of Land Management—with roots going

back almost 140 years.

Today's Bureau is a highly decentralized agency. It operates with 12 State Offices, 56 District Offices and 163 Resource Area Offices. Policy guidance is issued from the Washington Headquarters, while most of the decisions are made at the local level by these State, District and Area Offices. Local advisory councils, State and local governments, and private citizens participate heavily in the decisionmaking process.

The BLM today is responsible for the management, conservation, and development of the resources of more than 350 million acres of public land. The Bureau also administers mining and mineral leasing on an additional 410 million acres of mineral





estate underlying other Federal and private ownerships and approximately 1.4 billion acres lying offshore the United States on the Outer Continental Shelf.

It was not until 1976, 30 years after its formation, that the Bureau was given its "organic act," the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The Act replaced over 2,500 individual laws and was the first definitive, comprehensive statement of public management policy. It formally reversed the longstanding view that the public domain lands would eventually be disposed of; it mandated that they be retained in Federal ownership for the benefit of the entire Nation, unless it was in the public interest to dispose of a particular parcel.





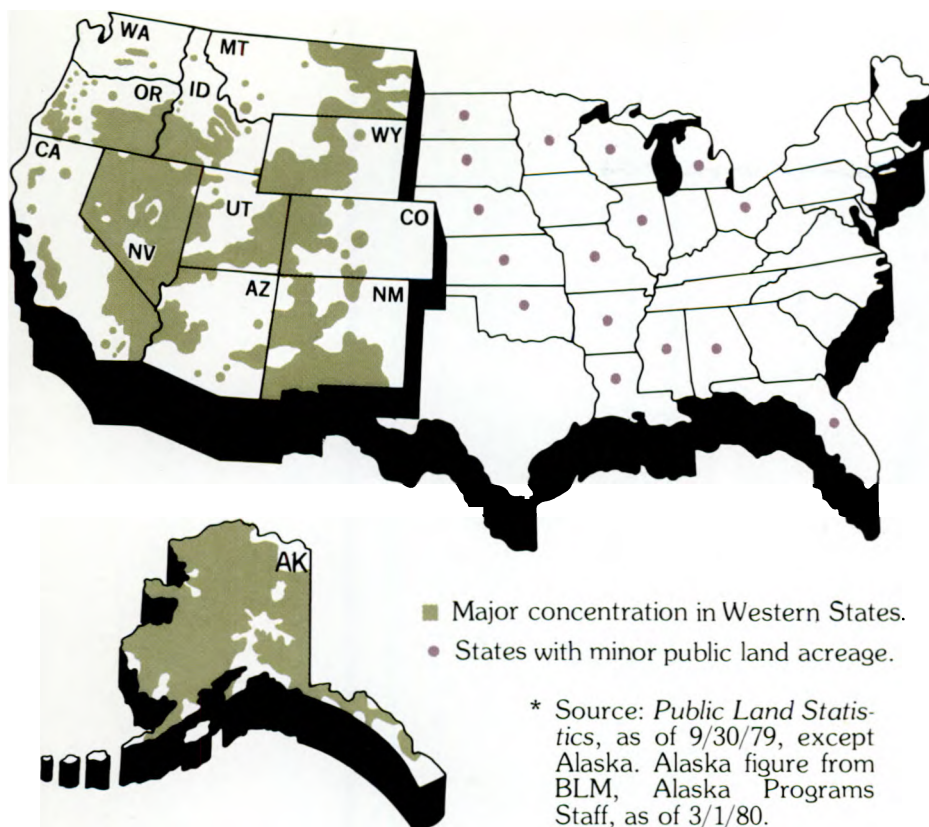
III. Multiple-Use Management . . . Key to the Future



Passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act in 1976 mirrored broadening national recognition that the public lands are important and their many resources necessary to the country's well-being. The legislation also recognized that these resources are not limitless; they require balanced use if their many benefits are to be realized. To this end, FLPMA established that public lands are to be managed under principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

Specifically, FLPMA charged BLM with:

" . . . management of the public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the needs of the American people . . . a combination of uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations



Public Lands Under Exclusive Jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management*

State	Acres
Alabama	3,257
Alaska	182,000,000
Arizona	12,588,901
Arkansas	1,589
California	16,598,125
Colorado	7,993,935
Florida	1,189
Idaho	11,945,888
Illinois	29
Kansas	728
Louisiana	7,206
Michigan	936
Minnesota	43,556
Mississippi	639
Missouri	200
Montana	8,141,620
Nebraska	9,432
Nevada	48,844,645
New Mexico	12,839,781
North Dakota	68,142
Ohio	120
Oklahoma	6,988
Oregon	15,741,018
South Dakota	276,388
Utah	22,052,564
Washington	311,157
Wisconsin	262
Wyoming	17,793,098
Total:	357,271,393

* Source: *Public Land Statistics*, as of 9/30/79, except Alaska figure from BLM, Alaska Programs Staff, as of 3/1/80.

for renewable and non-renewable resources, including, but not limited to, recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural, scenic, scientific and historical values... harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the environment with consideration being given to the relative values of the resources and not necessarily to the combination of uses that will give the greatest economic return or the greatest unit output."

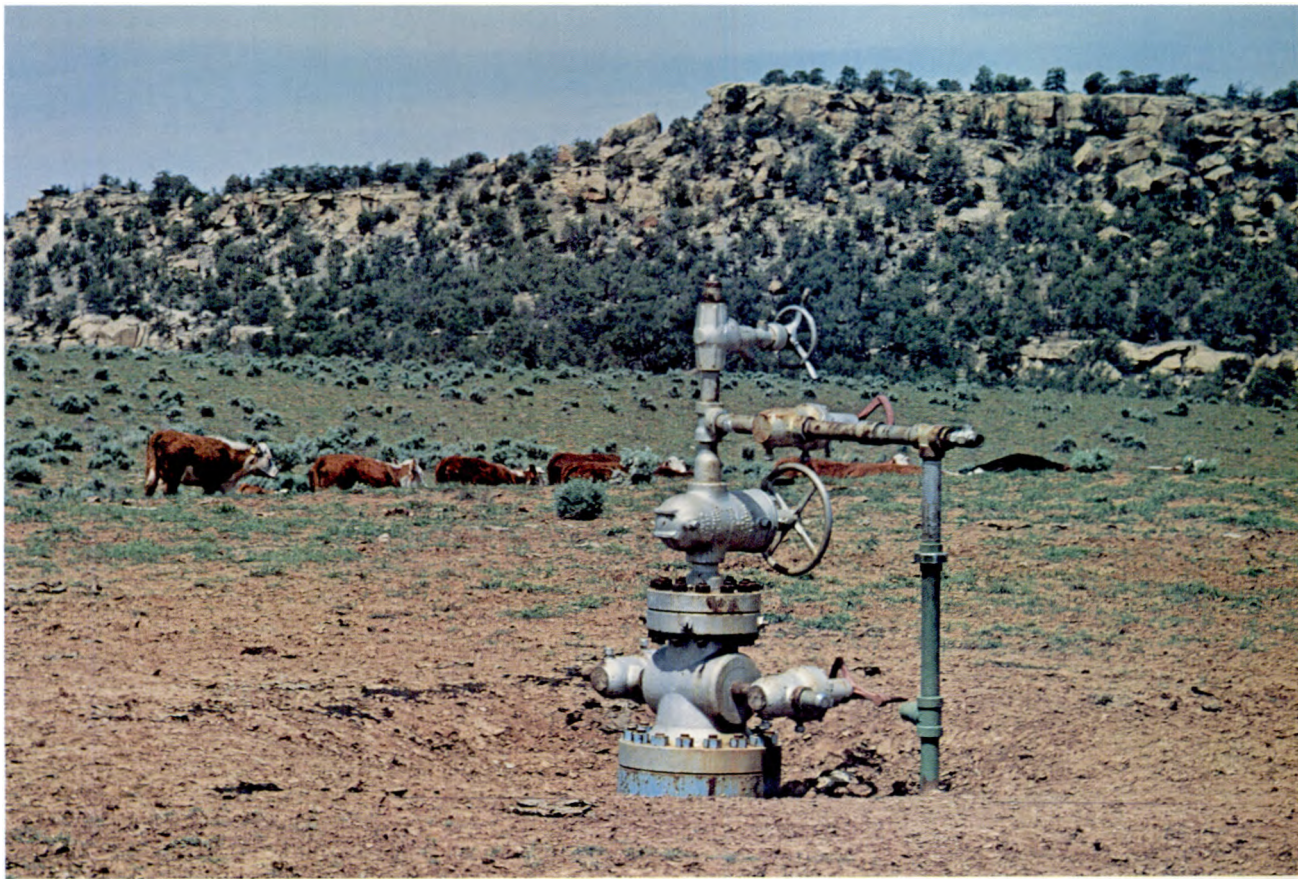
FLPMA further instructs BLM to inventory public land resources and to develop plans for the management of the resources of specific geographic areas with the full involvement of those who are interested and affected. Throughout this planning process for each

area, whether 20,000 or 12 million acres, BLM seeks consultation with each body that has a stake in the use or uses to be made of the area. This consultation is made at the local, State and national level—through BLM's advisory boards, through individual contacts with affected individuals and organizations, and in some cases, through special cooperative projects designed to provide an interchange of views. As the President instructed BLM in his 1979 Environmental Message, the Bureau attempts to "be a good neighbor," providing full opportunities for those affected by its land use management decisions to be involved in making them.

Beyond full public participation, another important element of the Bureau's planning system is delegation of authority. The majority of land use decisions, wherever

feasible, are made at the local level, not in Washington, D.C. BLM's fundamental belief is that local decisions are the most expeditious and most sensitive way to manage the resources of the public lands.

When a land use plan goes into effect for an area, a balanced mix of uses has been considered and is provided in most instances. The mix takes many forms. Trade-offs sometimes occur. For example, where an area is overgrazed by livestock, instead of immediate reductions that would adversely affect local economies, cutbacks in grazing allotments may be phased in over a period of years. The seasons that livestock use a range may be changed to accommodate wildlife that use the same area or livestock may be fenced out of riparian areas to protect wildlife habitat. Utility transmission lines



may be rerouted to avoid conflict with scenic views or only cable logging may be permitted in a forest so as to reduce road construction and protect a watershed.

A good example of the multiple-use concept employed by BLM is the South Pass area of Wyoming.

Nearly three-fourths of the 20,000 acres around South Pass is public land. Much attention has been focused on this area about 35 miles south of Lander because of its historical significance beginning with fur traders traveling through in the 1830's. The region later became the route of the Oregon Trail in the 1840's. There were Indian troubles in the 1850's, and gold mining and the Pony Express in the 1860's. In the 1870's, the State's only gold mining boom towns were built there.

While preserving evidence of these significant chapters in the history of the South Pass area, other uses are also being made of the land. Livestock grazing, forestry, fish and wildlife habitat management, land development

and present-day mining activities are accomplished side by side.

BLM's management of public lands in the Benton-Owens Valley area near Death Valley, California, also exemplifies the multiple-use philosophy. Going on simultaneously and harmoniously are the mining of sand, gravel, decorative rock and other mineral materials; grazing of 55,000 head of livestock each year; geothermal steam exploration; watershed management; and the protection and improvement of wildlife habitat, particularly that of bighorn sheep, the Tule elk and endangered Owens Valley pupfish. Interestingly enough, the watershed supports a good part of the water needs of the city of Los Angeles.

One spot in the area, the Alabama Hills, provides for another major multiple use—recreation. Each year a multitude of visitors flock to this unusual geologic formation to backpack, sightsee, hike or to participate in other activities. The sun-baked rocks in the Alabama Hills have



been seen by millions as a backdrop for scenes in western movies.

There are areas of the public lands that are so rich in mineral resources that multiple-use plans must balance mineral interests. For example, the 1.6-million acre Big Sandy planning unit near Rock Springs, Wyoming, lies in the heart of the Green River-Hams Fork coal region where billions of tons of coal have been identified. The Big Sandy is also rich in oil and gas reserves and is adjacent to the Overthrust Belt geologic formation which is predicted to hold the Nation's richest oil and gas reserves outside Alaska. Each year, the Big Sandy and adjacent Kemmerer planning units together provide 7 million tons of trona, from which sodium bicarbonate is derived. The two units could provide all world sodium needs. Furthermore, a portion of the Big Sandy has been withdrawn since 1930 by Executive Order to protect an oil shale deposit until its recovery becomes technologically feasible. Miners recover uranium, zeolites,

some silver and gold and exotic minerals. Sand and gravel are sold from these lands.

Yet the Big Sandy, which gets its name from its mammoth scenic sand dunes, has other values as well. There is potential for wilderness, archeological study and paleontological finds. Arrowheads, spearheads, drillpoints—even a full-scale Indian buffalo robe—have been discovered here. Once an inland sea, the area is rich in paleontological resources: dinosaur bones have been recovered, and fossilized ancient fishes, snails and plants have become part of museum collections around the world.

Vast ranges provide forage for sheep, cattle, wild and free-roaming horses, antelope, elk and deer. There is habitat for the endangered black-footed ferret. Raptors are abundant and habitat must be protected for such endangered species as the peregrine falcon and the bald eagle.

A land-use plan for the Big Sandy must make other considera-

tions: Boom town effects occur as minerals are developed. Colorado River headwaters must be protected under an international treaty with Mexico. A coal generated powerplant in Big Sandy supplies power hundreds of miles to Wyoming, Idaho and Utah. Four-wheel drives are used widely by local people and must be provided for along with safeguards against excessive land damage.

BLM's management of a 490,000-acre unit of public land in Western Oregon exemplifies most dramatically the multiple-use philosophy. The primary use of the area is timber production yielding 128 million board feet annually. The second most intensive use is recreation, with some 750,000 persons visiting each year. There are 16 developed recreation sites in the unit, ranging from picnic areas to trails for hiking, horseback riding, skiing, and snowmobile use. Some trails are specifically set aside for off-road vehicles. Hunting, fishing, swimming, rock-hounding, and boating also attract thousands.

Some half dozen other uses exist in the unit. Rangelands in the unit support domestic livestock grazing, a sizeable herd of wild horses and burros and, during the winter months, herds of deer and elk. Two hundred miles of streams are managed for streambank protection to ensure water quality for aquatic life and downstream usage. Eight areas are set aside for the spotted owl, and other areas are to be set aside for other raptors, including the peregrine falcon. Still other tracts of land have been identified as potential wilderness and scientific study areas.

Mining rounds out the multiple uses of the area. Gold and silver are sought, as well as oil and gas, uranium, and geothermal steam. Many quarries in the area yield massive amounts of rock, and other construction materials.

IV. America's Mineral Wealth

Since the days of the Forty-niners, public land States in the West have contributed enormously to the wealth of the Nation. First, precious metals such as gold and silver flowed in abundance from the lands. California had its Sutter's Mill and Colorado its Cripple Creek. The discovery of silver drew throngs to Bonanza and Tombstone, Arizona, and in 1896, the rush was to Alaska for gold. Few States and territories escaped the miners' picks, and no discovery eclipsed that in 1859 of the most valuable silver ore deposit ever recorded, the great Comstock Lode in Nevada.

While men scrambled for precious metals, the West began supplying less glamorous metals and minerals for the Nation's industry—lead, zinc, borax, iron, and most notably, copper. It gave Arizona the name "Copper State." It is the chief metal mined in Utah, and a claim staked in 1875 on a hill overlooking Butte, Montana, eventually became the world's richest copper mine. Demand for the metal for electrical wiring skyrocketed in the late 1880's when electric lighting became an important business in the United States. Copper mining in the West flourished.

The public lands have since become the source of lesser known minerals as America's technological know-how increased. Beryllium, used to make copper alloys, is mined in several States. The world's principal producing source of molybdenite, used in steel and iron alloys, is in Colorado. Idaho is one of the few producers of antimony used chiefly in alloys and compounds of medicine. It is also the world's second largest producer of phosphate. Important deposits of potash for making fertilizer are found in New Mexico, California and Utah.

Mineral development on the public lands was first brought under Federal supervision by the General Mining Law of 1872. The law permitted a prospector to look for minerals on most public lands, stake a claim, and operate a mine without payment or even notifying the Federal Government. A prudent prospector registered his claim with county authorities to assure that no other claims existed, but he was not required to inform the Federal Government unless he applied for patent (title).

The law, as intended, worked to the advantage of the miner and was so framed that it encouraged the development and settlement of the Western States. Environmental concerns about the public lands were a much later development.

The General Mining Law of 1872 is still on the books. However, notable changes have occurred as the push for Western development and settlement gave way to more practical, economic concerns. The Mineral Lands Leasing Act of 1920 made coal, oil and gas, phosphate, sodium, and potash obtainable from public lands only through leasing and payment of a royalty to the Government. In 1947, the Materials Act made a number of building and other common materials (sand, gravel, clay, pumice, and stone) available only through purchase. Remaining subject to the 1872 Mining Law today are gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, uranium, and various other "hard rock" minerals.

While these later statutes have provided a measure of Federal control over the public mineral

estate, they provide little discretion to public administrators at a time when conflicting uses for the land abound. Mineral production remains one of the most important contributions the public lands can make to national needs; however, this must also be balanced with other land use demands from equally legitimate sources.

Another major change in mineral development on public lands was brought about by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). One of its provisions is that all unpatented mining claims on public lands must be recorded with the Bureau of Land Management. Previously, inventory of the estimated 1.8 million unpatented mining claims was next to impossible, creating a persistent and significant roadblock to effective planning and management of the public lands. The abandoned claims cause substantial title problems because they are still on the books in local county recorders' offices.

Under FLPMA, all new mining claims must be filed with BLM

within 90 days after location. Failure to file constitutes abandonment, even though the claims are recorded in the local county office.

The same Act also directs the Secretary of the Interior to take action to prevent unnecessary degradation of the public lands and their resources. This provision strengthens the Federal Government's existing authority to regulate mineral exploration, development and mining operations of "hard-rock minerals" on public land to protect other resource values and the environment.

A sampling of the many minerals found on the public lands.



Energy Minerals from Public Lands (Actual Production 1971-79) (Projected Production 1980)

Coal (million tons)

Petroleum* (million barrels)

Natural Gas (billion cubic feet)

90 500 5000

85 475 4750

80 450 4500

75 425 4250

70 400 4000

65 375 3750

60 350 3500

55 325 3200

50 300 3000

45 275 2750

40 250 2500

35 225 2250

30 200 2000

25 175 1750

20 150 1500

15 125 1250

10 100 1000

FY 1971 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80

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Outer Continental Shelf

Outer Continental Shelf

Onshore Public Lands

Onshore Public Lands

*The decline in petroleum production can be attributed to the gradual depletion of known reserves. An increase in petroleum from the Outer Continental Shelf is anticipated when production begins in new areas opened for oil and gas development. Source: U.S. Geological Survey

can be used to generate electricity, to desalt water, and to recover minerals. The city of San Francisco, for example, already is receiving a significant amount of its electrical power from plants built to generate electricity by harnessing natural geysers. More than 95 million acres of public lands have been identified as being potentially valuable for production of this energy source.

The public lands also are called upon to provide sites and routes for the facilities necessary to process, generate, convert, and transport energy into desired forms where it is needed. As energy fuels of the public lands enter the Nation's energy system in the years ahead, energy fuel development and energy sites will become a major use of the public domain and will also impact on the communities nearby.

Onshore Federal lands contain vast amounts of fossil fuels. Half of the Nation's coal reserves is in the

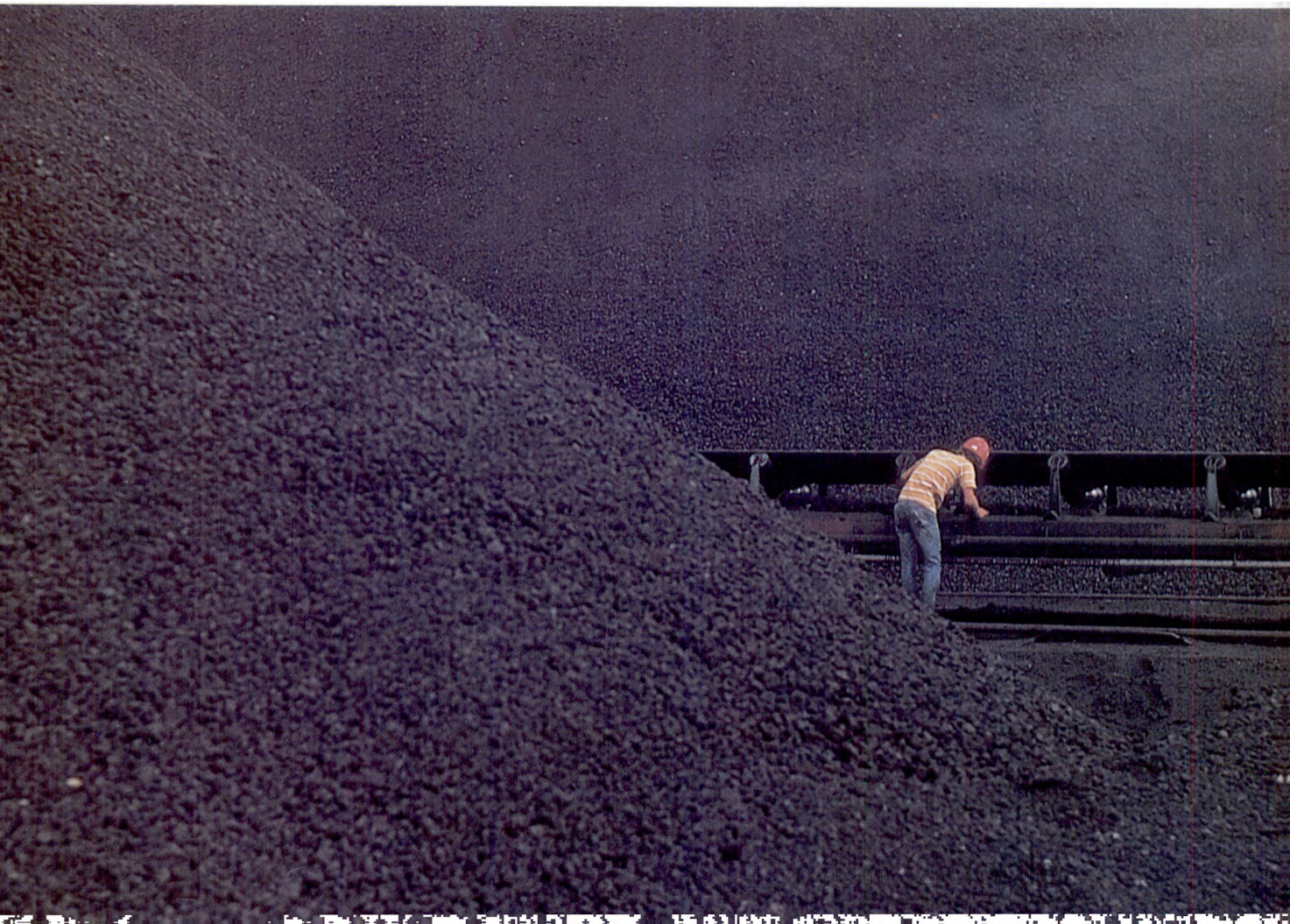
West and 60 percent of that coal is on public lands. Public lands in six States—Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, and Alaska—contain enormous coal reserves. In addition, by reserving the mineral estate at the time the land passed into private title, the Federal Government controls the leasing and reserving of coal and the other minerals underlying much private land.

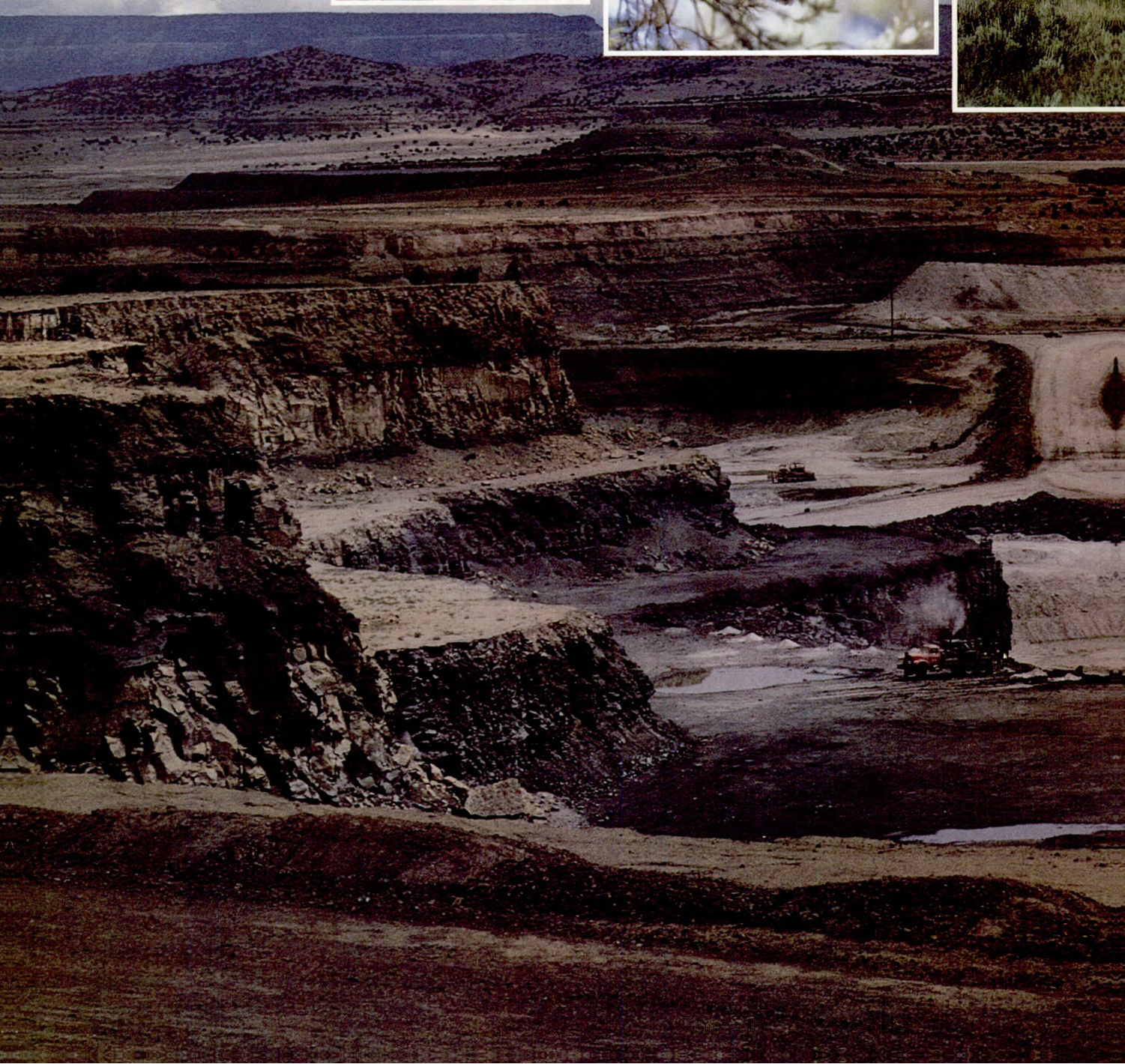
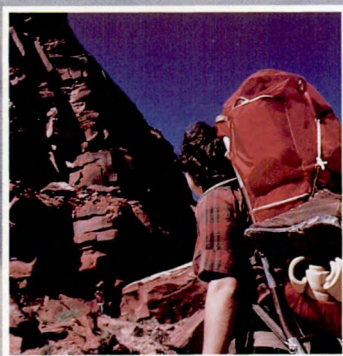
Public lands in Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming have the largest known oil shale reserves in the Free World. Tar sand deposits on Federal land in Utah may soon begin to contribute their share of energy to the Nation's needs as legal questions are cleared and technology makes tar sand development feasible.

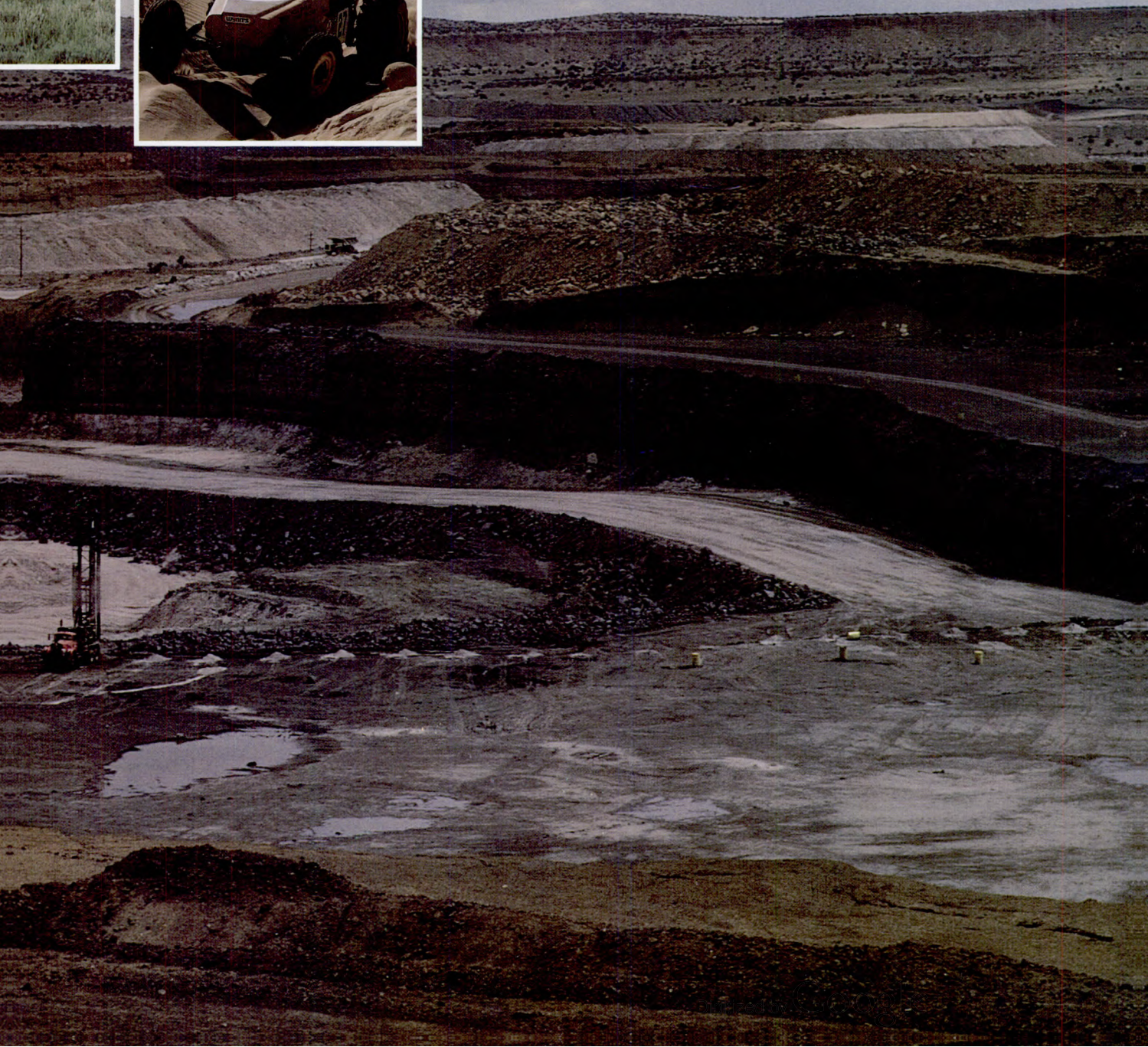
A promising site for the discovery of oil and gas reserves is the region known as the Overthrust Belt alongside the Rocky Mountains in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada. After

FLPMA's passage, 11.4 million acres of public land in the Belt were subject to wilderness inventory to determine where wilderness characteristics existed and which lands ought to be studied further for possible inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Bureau accelerated its wilderness inventory on these Overthrust Belt lands in order to cause least interference with the petroleum industry's continuing search for new domestic sources of oil and gas. At the beginning of 1980, nearly 8 million acres of public lands in the Belt already had been identified as lacking wilderness characteristics and had been returned to other uses.

The abundance of oil and gas on Federal lands in Alaska and the Western States is well documented. In 1978, a total of 2,728 producing wells were yielding fuel and 10,677 exploration wells were drilled in the hopes of finding even more oil and natural gas.









VI. Western Range to World Markets

Along with the fur trapper, miner and homesteader, the livestockman helped open the West and became a colorful symbol of rugged individualism and independence. The cowboy was a man molded by history and his environment.

From the beginning, the western rancher grazed his livestock on public land—the open range. In the early years, one man's legal right to a given range was no better than another's, and the competition for grass and water was often bitter.

The competition was often triggered by ambition and greed, tempered by the vagaries of

weather—from droughts and dust bowls to below zero temperatures and deep snows. Struggles for land ownership, speculation and fraud were a part of the scene.

Range wars erupted, pitting cattlemen against cattlemen, cattlemen against sheepmen and, with the introduction of barbed wire which ultimately closed the West, fencers against non-fencers. In spite of these conflicts, the livestock industry prospered.

Domestic livestock operations based on public lands still play a vital role in the economic prosperity of many communities in the Western States. Thousands of people earn their livelihoods in livestock production and meat processing industries. Additional thousands are employed in industries using byproducts to make leather, pet food, textiles, and

other commodities. More thousands are employed by businesses that supply goods and services to these industries and by railroads and trucking firms that move products to markets across the country.

Today BLM manages 170 million acres of rangelands. More than 21,000 livestock operators graze about nine million head of domestic livestock—cattle, sheep, goats, and horses—on public lands. About four percent of the Nation's beef is produced on these lands, and 28 percent of the Nation's sheep also graze on public lands for a part of their lives, for which ranchers pay grazing fees.

Livestock grazing on public lands is managed by BLM under a concept called an Allotment Management Plan (AMP). This is a plan worked out between the BLM



range manager and the rancher. It is tailored to fit the ranchers' needs and the limitations imposed by the condition of the land and all other uses being made of it.

An AMP takes into account the amount of forage expected, and what part of that forage reasonably could be expected for domestic livestock use. It considers the effects of adverse weather. It takes into account physiological needs of plants, the needs of wildlife and wild horses, and determines how a grazing system can be fitted to those needs. An AMP sets up programs to improve the productive capacity of the range by water development, fencing, improving varieties of forage, etc. It is designed not only to reverse deterioration, but to improve the range so that it can better support grazing and better meet wildlife needs.

It was not until the 1970's that Congress made an overwhelming commitment to improvement of the Nation's public rangelands. In 1976, Congress passed the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) which authorizes four-year funding for BLM's programs and calls for 50 percent of all grazing fees to be used for rangeland improvement.

In 1978, Congress underscored its commitment to improving the quality and productivity of the public rangelands with the Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA) and with amendments to the 1974 Sikes Act. These two laws direct the Bureau to place special emphasis on improving and managing basic soil, water, wildlife, and vegetation resources and authorize additional money for the Bureau's on-going range,

wildlife, and soil and water programs.

These three building blocks—FLPMA, PRIA, and Sikes—provide authorization for rangeland management programs over the next two decades. Additional funding is also available through the range betterment funds derived from the 50 percent of the grazing fees paid by livestock operators. Through these sources, more than \$2 billion is authorized for rangeland improvements by the turn of the century.

Work has begun on the long and continuous process to stabilize soil and improve water supplies, provide vegetation and forage to sustain a thriving livestock industry, provide adequate wildlife habitat, ensure humane management of wild horses and burros, provide more recreational opportunities—in short, to balance all the legitimate needs for these valuable national lands.

The Western public rangelands are all kinds of land, from semi-arid lowlands to high-elevation alpine meadows. They are a variety of complex ecosystems composed of plant and animal communities and basic soil types, all responsive in one way or another to climate and the activities of man.

These ecosystems are the potential source of numerous economic and social benefits, some critical to the well-being of many Western communities. The key to unlocking these benefits is wise management of the vegetation resource. Water quantity and quality; soil productivity and stability; wildlife habitat; forage for livestock and wild horses and burros; and aesthetics are all irrevocably tied to vegetation.

No single element in the rangeland ecosystem is so readily managed, and with such far-reaching effects, as vegetation. Therefore, BLM considers the maintenance and improvement of the vegetation component of these ecosystems as the key to enhancing the resource values of the public rangelands to permit a balanced mix of uses and to ensure sustained yield.



VII. Habitat for Wildlife

The public lands provide habitat for a variety of wildlife. For at least a part of the year, these lands provide a home and food for almost 200,000 antelope, 74,000 bears, 39,000 bighorn sheep, and 740 buffalo, including the only free-roaming herd still left in the United States. There are also an estimated 400,000 caribou, more than a million deer, 152,000 moose, 95,000 elk, and 20,000 mountain goats.

Management of wildlife on the public lands is a joint effort between BLM and the individual States. Basically, BLM is responsible for habitat management and the States for species management. There are formal agreements with each of the States where BLM manages significant acreages of land to strengthen joint working relationships and on-the-ground habitat improvements.

The Bureau's authority to manage wildlife habitat on the public lands is contained in a number of laws, and this authority was reinforced through FLPMA.

The needs of wildlife are considered in all BLM land use programs. However, in certain areas, wildlife is considered as the primary use of the land, taking priority over all other uses.

Examples of specific areas set aside as crucial habitats for wildlife include: 24,500 acres in southern Nevada designated as protected habitat for desert bighorn sheep; one thousand acres in New Mexico and Arizona for the rare Mexican duck; 30,000 acres in the California desert for the desert tortoise; and 3,640 acres in Nevada to assure protection of the desert pupfish.

An 81-mile stretch of the Snake River Canyon in southern Idaho has been reserved to protect birds of prey. Here among the cracks, ledges and crevasses of the sheer bluffs rising above the canyon floor can be found the nesting site of the world's largest concentration of raptors. Among the birds



that use the canyon are golden eagles, prairie falcons, red-tailed hawks, ospreys and great horned owls.

The first effort to protect the area came in 1971 when the Secretary of the Interior designated the first portion of the canyon as the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area. Later, studies showed that the area encompassed only a portion of the total nesting area used by the raptors and none of their "kitchen" or prey habitat. In 1974, an additional 278,000 acres were added to the area for study purposes. It is proposed that an even larger area, which has been identified as part of the birds' total ecosystem, be designated as the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area.

While the area would be designated primarily for the protection of birds of prey and their hunting and nesting grounds, other non-conflicting uses would continue. These include hunting, fishing, livestock grazing, mining and mineral development, plus the customary use by the Idaho National Guard for training exercises.



VIII. The Wild Ones... Living Symbols of the Old West

Caught up in the struggle to protect and maintain productive rangeland resources are the wild, free-roaming horses and burros. In 1978, an estimated 63,000 roamed across Federal lands, primarily in Nevada, Oregon, Wyoming, New Mexico, California,

Utah, Montana, Colorado, and Arizona.

Neither the horse nor the burro is native to the West. Spanish conquistadors introduced both to the New World in the 1500's. Horses that escaped during Spanish expeditions out of Mexico became the nucleus of the first wild horse herds in North America. These were joined by horses turned loose by farmers and ranchers when water and forage were scarce in the "dust bowl" conditions of the 1930's.

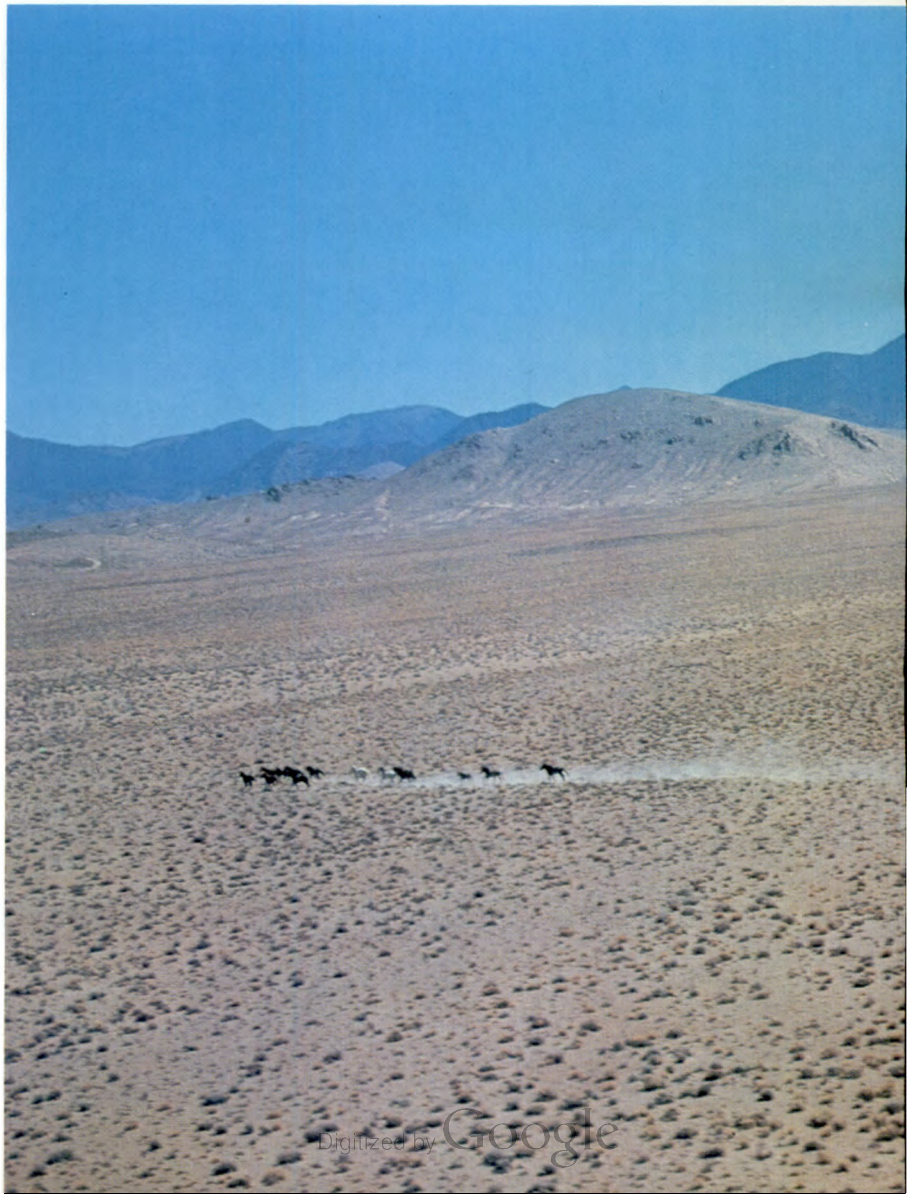
Burros brought into the Southwest by Jesuit missionaries were later used extensively by miners. When mining claims failed or Indians ambushed camps, the burros were left to roam the deserts. Some reports say as many as two million wild burros and horses at one time roamed the ranges. As with the buffalo, however, the

herds were reduced to near extinction by "mustangers" who captured and sold them for commercial use.

To protect dwindling herds of these "living symbols" of America's Western heritage, the U.S. Congress in 1971 passed the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act. An avid supporter of the legislation was a colorful and controversial figure known as "Wild Horse Annie," the late Mrs. Velma Johnston of Reno, Nevada.

"Wild Horse Annie" was aided in her campaign to protect the animals by humane societies and horse protection organizations. Also, thousands of American schoolchildren joined in a nationwide letterwriting crusade to Members of Congress.

The Wild Horse and Burro Act gave responsibility for management and protection of the



animals to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture Departments. Since nearly all of these animals are on the public lands, the Bureau of Land Management plays the major role in carrying out the law.

Since passage of the wild horse and burro legislation in 1971, the herds on public lands have increased; their numbers have burgeoned and continue to climb annually. Excessive wild horses and burros are causing a serious problem, contributing to erosion and a significantly deteriorating range.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) allows BLM to use helicopters to round up wild horses and burros and motorized vehicles to transport them.

Helicopters are permitted now because there are fewer experienced cowboys and fewer trained



horses capable of matching the wiles of the wild ones. Horseback capture is also more dangerous for all concerned, the riders and mounts as well as the animals.

In Spring 1976, the Bureau launched a nationwide "Adopt-A-Horse" program designed to find foster homes for excess wild

horses and burros removed from the western rangelands. By the start of 1980, more than 15,000 animals had been adopted by individuals in 47 States.

The "Adopt-A-Horse" program was affected dramatically by passage of the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978. Before its passage, adopted wild horses and burros remained wards of the Federal Government for their lifetime. The new legislation permits the U.S. Government to transfer ownership to up to four animals a year to an adopter who has given the animals one year of humane care and treatment.





IX. Trees . . . A Renewable Resource



The General Land Office in 1937 became responsible for managing timber resources on approximately two million acres of prime timberland in western Oregon. The land involved had once been a part of a Federal grant to the Oregon and California Railroad as an inducement to the company to build a railroad from the Columbia River to the California border.

The railroad was built, but in 1916, the Federal Government repossessed the land because the railroad company had not abided by terms of the original grant.

Because the land involved was prime timberland, Congress passed the Oregon and California (O&C) Act on August 28, 1937, to provide for a program of forest management. Responsibility for this management program rested with the Bureau of Land Management when it assumed all responsibilities of the General Land Office in 1946.

In addition to managing the O&C lands, BLM also is responsible for managing about 23 million acres of commercial timberlands on the public domain in 11 other Western States, including Alaska.

Commercial forest products from lands administered by BLM are sold through competitive bidding. Timber sales provide the raw material that supports a thriving lumber industry in western Oregon and contributes to lumber production in other public land States. About 1.2 billion board feet of timber—enough to build 86,000 three-bedroom houses—comes from the public lands in an average year.

In addition to the harvest of timber, BLM also manages its forest lands on a multiple-use basis that includes, among others, recreation, water retention, fish and wildlife habitat, and livestock grazing.



X. A Rich Cultural Inheritance

Public lands abound with historic, prehistoric, and scientific resources. Examples range from the ruts cut by wagons on the Oregon Trail, still visible in many areas, to petroglyphs carved on the face of rocks by Indians as long as 10,000 years ago. In some areas, entire towns* or even districts provide us with links to our past.

The heritage of Indian culture is evident throughout the public lands of the West. The Anasazi of the Southwest, the Nez Perce and Yakima in the Northwest, and the Ipiutak of Alaska have left behind reminders of life in cliff dwellings and at favored camping areas. They exist side by side with ancient dinosaur bones and more



"modern" mining ghost town remnants.

BLM has the responsibility and unparalleled opportunity to preserve these unique remnants of a historic and prehistoric past so that future generations can view what once was, instead of being forced to know them only in musty records, libraries, or museums.

XI. Recreation Wonderland

Pressures to create more recreational areas across the country are intense. Our national and State parks are flooded with visitors. Ironically, open spaces, greenery, clean air, campsites, and various facilities—the very values that attract so many people to the parks—are threatened with serious damage because of crowd pressures. The public lands are, in many cases, the only really open lands left.

The competition to use these lands is by no means limited to recreationists. The lands hold energy reserves, other minerals, timber and other resources. As more land has been developed to secure these resources and the need for even more development increases, those open spaces become harder to find.

To ensure some continued opportunity to experience the land in its pristine state, the Congress set up the National Wilderness Preservation System. In FLPMA the Congress directed the BLM to recommend suitable public lands for designation to the system. These lands would be 5,000-acre, or more, roadless areas, or roadless islands identified as having wilderness characteristics and

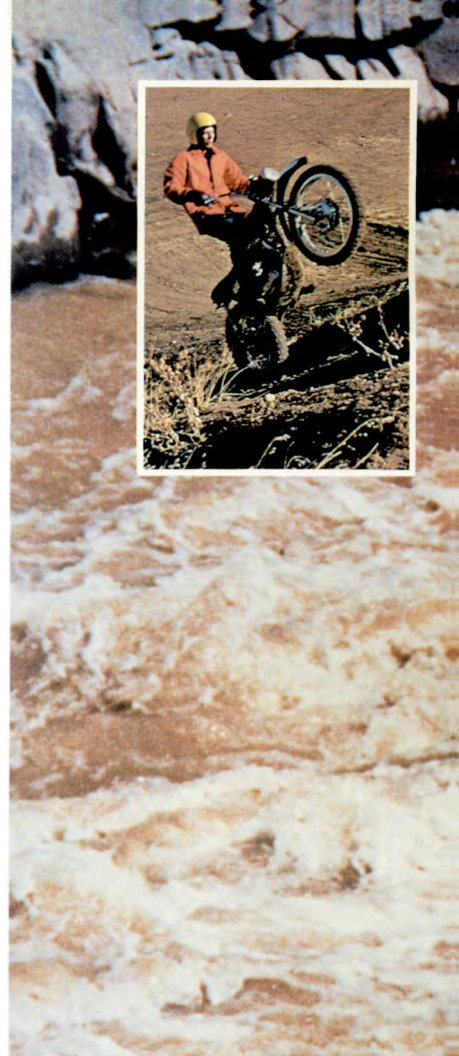
found through study and review to be more suitable for wilderness than for other uses.

An inventory to identify public lands that have wilderness characteristics is complete as of October 1980. Recommendations on the suitability of areas will be made to the President who will, in turn, make recommendations to Congress. Recommendations will be complete in 1991. Congress will decide which areas are to be preserved as wilderness.

Prior to the passage of FLPMA, BLM had designated 11 sites on the public lands as primitive areas and identified another 44 as natural areas. These are being studied first for possible inclusion in the Nation's wilderness system. The Bureau was directed to report its recommendations on these areas to the President by July 1, 1980.

The public will have a major role in decisions concerning wilderness selections and will be involved in each phase of the wilderness area identification process.

One of the most startling developments in outdoor recreation in recent years is the phenomenal growth and use of recreational vehicles. From motorcycles to



dune buggies, and from 4-wheel drives to campers, they are driven over forest, range, and desert land in massive numbers. Millions of such vehicles roll over the deserts of California, Nevada, Arizona, and Utah each year, and their numbers are growing.

Public concern over damage to the land has led to Federal regulation of off-road vehicle (ORV) use. While the Bureau recognizes ORV recreation as an acceptable use of the public lands and accommodates off-road drivers to the extent compatible with other resource uses and environmental values, some areas have been closed. In others, drivers may use only roads and trails. From time to time, because of drought, high fire danger or other conditions, some areas may be temporarily closed.

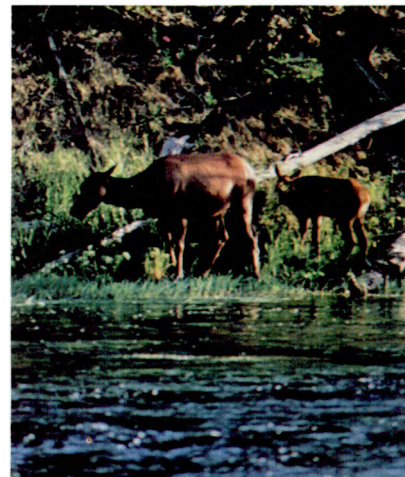


XII. Water . . . Precious to the Land



Water is a resource that is limited throughout most of the public land States. Many areas receive less than 10 inches of moisture in an average year. Yet water is vital in the development of such energy minerals as oil shale and coal, as well as for irrigation, domestic use, and wildlife.

While much of the public land can be classified as desert or semi-desert, the water that does fall often comes, unfortunately, in the form of violent summer storms that result in rapid runoff and erosion of the soil.



BLM manages public land watersheds to retain as much water as possible on the land. Slowing down the rate of runoff helps to stabilize stream flow, and the limited amount of precipitation is given more time to be absorbed into the soil where it can contribute to ground water reserves. While there is no practical way to increase the amount of water, sound management of watersheds will make better use of the available water supply.

XIII. Sharing the Benefits

Foods, fibers and minerals produced on the public lands benefit many people in many ways. Residents of New York dine on beef and lamb grazed on public lands in Wyoming and Montana. Virginians live in houses built with timber harvested on Federal lands in Oregon and Washington and heated with gas and oil piped from the Outer Continental Shelf offshore Louisiana. Farmers in Kansas may enrich their farmlands with fertilizers made from phosphates mined on public lands in New Mexico, while automobile workers in Detroit assemble cars with parts strengthened with ores extracted from Federal lands in Utah.

Despite their bountiful contributions, the public lands have long been the center of controversy between Federal, State and local governments. A part of this controversy has stemmed from the fact that these lands are tax exempt.

Recognizing this loss of tax revenue, and the impact that certain activities on the public lands have on local communities, the Federal Government returns to each State a share of the revenue collected for mineral leasing, grazing fees, and the sale of land and material.

With the exception of Alaska, each public land State receives 50 percent of all revenue royalties collected within its boundaries. Alaska receives 75.6 percent of oil and gas royalties and 88.2 percent of all other mineral rents and bonuses.



In the decade 1970 through 1979, State and local governments in public land States received \$1.8 billion from the Federal Government as their share of revenues collected from the sale of public land resources and as in-lieu payments for tax exempt lands. The amount of money going to these States each year rose from \$52 million in 1970 to \$380 million in 1979.



The Federal Government's share of the revenues collected from grazing and mining goes into the U.S. Treasury. A portion of this money, along with receipts from oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf, is transferred each year into a fund to help local governments plan, acquire and develop outdoor recreation projects. Money from this Land and Water Conservation Fund is allocated to each of the 50 States and the U.S. Territories on a matching grant basis. As of November 1979, grants distributed by the Fund totaled \$2.2 billion, with more than \$450 million going to the major public land States to help finance some 5,700 recreational facilities for all citizens to enjoy.



XIV. Guardian of the Promise

While the Bureau's responsibility is to manage the public lands, it also has a responsibility to protect the lands from the ravages of wild-fire and other destructive forces, including abuses and illegal acts by users.

The most destructive enemy of resources is wildfire. Some 700,000 acres are laid waste each year by man-made and, more frequently, lightning-caused fires.

Wildfires are fought throughout the Western States, including Alaska, using the most modern firefighting equipment and techniques. Suppression methods vary from the use of hand and power tools to helicopters, retardant planes, and smokejumpers.

A network of lightning detection units derived from technology developed in America's space program is proving its value to the fire control effort. A single detection unit can monitor a 250-mile area and locate, within a one-mile radius, the site of suspected lightning-sparked fires. Nearby firefighters can move quickly to extinguish the blaze.

In operating its fire control system, local BLM offices usually have sufficient manpower, equipment, and supplies to undertake initial attack. If additional help is needed, it is supplied by the Boise Interagency Fire Center in Idaho. This is a cooperative fire management manpower and material complex involving BLM, the Forest Service, National Weather Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

As soon as the fires are extinguished, rehabilitation efforts are begun. Dead but usable trees are salvaged, and burned areas are re-



seeded to control soil erosion and produce forage for wildlife and livestock.

Because of increasingly easy access, crime increased on public lands in the 1960's and 1970's. Range arson, illegal mineral removal, trespassing, rare plant theft, recreational misuse, theft of petroglyphs and other antiquities, and vandalism or destruction of Government property all have become problems of resource management on public lands. Framers of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act addressed these problems by:

—Setting a criminal penalty for any person who willfully violates a regulation established by the Secretary of the Interior for the protection, use and management of the public lands and their actual resources.

—Permitting the Bureau to enter into agreements with local authorities to enforce laws and regulations on behalf of BLM, and authorizing the establishment of a law enforcement organization within BLM.



XV. The View Ahead

During our years as a Nation, the attitude toward the public lands has moved from a philosophy of disposal and settlement to a concept of retention and multiple-use management. The change in attitude has been most dramatic over the past decade.

Both the General Land Office and the Grazing Service were created as single-mission agencies. Today their successor, the Bureau of Land Management, is a multiple-purpose agency involved in many disciplines.

The evolution of the Bureau has been dictated by changes in public attitude that have, in turn, been reflected in new laws and judicial

decisions relating to application of public land laws.

It seems certain that these trends are going to continue. The public lands were once counted only in terms of mineral, timber, and grazing values. While these values will be treasured even more, in future years, the lands' greatest potential may likely be a wealth of yet to be discovered opportunities, as well as acknowledgment of historical, cultural and scientific values, or even isolation and outdoor recreation. The very existence of these lands, held in trust for all the people, and for all time, may be their greatest value.

Just a few years ago, the public



lands concerned only the people of the West, particularly those involved in using these lands. Today, the interest is nationwide.

The traditional uses of the public lands will continue because it is clear that the Nation's needs for energy fuels, minerals, timber, and food will accelerate. The public lands remain an important source of these commodities and will continue to be for years to come. It is therefore a management principle and practice to restore and enlarge upon the productivity and quality of the land and its renewable resources. As spelled out in the new legislative mandate, the Federal Land Policy

and Management Act of 1976, this is to be accomplished in harmony with other uses and with great concern for the environment.

It is equally significant that management policies affecting the public lands will be made by more people as they become involved in the decisionmaking process of the Bureau of Land Management.

In the final analysis, the public lands are your lands. What they are and what they become is largely up to you. You will determine if this great national estate fulfills the promise of the land for all Americans.



Major Photographs

Cover and Inside Cover: Sakakpak Mountain along the Haul Road in Alaska

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Promise of the land.



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Promise of the Land

U.S. Department of the Interior. As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**



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